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SUBJECT: GOM REGISTERS CONCERN ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS
COMMISSION'S NON-MEETING IN ALGIERS

REF: RABAT 1032 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Pol/C Timothy Lenderking for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (U) On June 2, the Mission received the following diplomatic note from the MFA, which was delivered to all diplomatic missions and international organizations in Rabat.

Enclosed with the note was a copy of the official statement issued by the MFA registering the Government of Morocco's concern over the cancellation of the United Nations Human Rights High Commissioner's previously arranged stop in Algiers, which had been scheduled for May 24-25.

¶3. (U) Begin Embassy translation of MFA statement:

The Kingdom of Morocco
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation

Rabat, June 1st, 2006

The Kingdom of Morocco learned with great surprise and serious concern the cancellation of the Algiers stop, expected May 24-25, 2006, of the Human Rights High Commissioner regional mission. This visit was to conclude the regional trip that brought the United Nations Mission to Morocco on May 15-19, and to Tindouf on May 20-23, according to the terms of reference agreed by the High Commissioner.

This cancellation, as well as the total silence about it from the High Commissioner, raised some questions and a lack of understanding within the Moroccan government. Consequently, the Moroccan Permanent Mission in Geneva immediately requested an explanation about the reasons of the Mission's change of program as well as regarding the absence of reaction and communication from the United Nations agency on this subject.

In a meeting between the Permanent Representative of Morocco in Geneva, Ambassador Mohamed Loulichki, and the Human Rights High Commissioner, Louise Arbour, on Wednesday, May 31, Ms. Arbour said that she was unable to give any explanation regarding this cancellation, planned in Algiers with Algerian Ministry of Foreign Affairs officers.

This situation is of a serious concern to Morocco which claims, legitimately, the right to get appropriate information and explanation. The Government of the Kingdom

of Morocco recalls that the Algiers stop was aimed at discussing with Algerian officers the human rights abuses committed on their soil, about which Morocco provided the United Nations delegation, when they visited Rabat, an aide-memoire giving details from victims of these abuses.

Morocco, which spared no effort so that this mission could take place in the best conditions, considers that the cancellation of the Algerian stop is a blatant evasion to the call of the United Nations Secretary General who, in his October 13, 2005 report to the United Nations Security Council, urged the parties and Algeria, as a country of asylum, to cooperate fully with the UN Human Rights High Commissioner.

Moreover, this cancellation is a violation of the UN Mission terms of reference, agreed upon by the High Commissioner, Morocco, and Algeria. With this attitude, Algeria undermines the High Commissioner's credibility as well as its noble mission of securing human rights in the world.

Algeria's obstruction to the UN mission does not exempt this country from observing its international obligations, irrefutable and universal, regarding all these human rights abuses committed on its soil, both in the Tindouf camps and towards hundreds of former prisoners.

The Kingdom of Morocco is still expecting the necessary explanations regarding the cancellation of the mission's visit in Algiers, a stop duly agreed on in the mission's regional trip.

End Embassy translation.

Comment

14. (C) The GOM is incensed that the GOA apparently blew off scheduled meetings of the UN Human Rights Commission in Algiers. MFA SecGen Hilale told Polcouns June 2 that he hoped the US and other interested parties would seek an explanation. As our reporting indicated, the GOM only reluctantly agreed to the commission's visit to Morocco and the Western Sahara in the first place (and under lobbying from the US embassy in Rabat), and was all along displeased with the short stop envisaged for Algiers, which Moroccan officials complained allowed the GOA to distance itself unfairly from human rights abuses during the Western Sahara conflict. We welcome information from Geneva or Algiers that can shed light on what exactly happened, as the GOM is telling us the delegation arrived at the airport in Algiers, waited in vain for contact with the GOA for several hours, and then departed. Surely High Commissioner Arbour has more to say about this than she apparently told Loulichki.

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